

**TO UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DOCTOR ANDREI MARGA
ON THE OCCASION OF AWARDING THE DOCTOR
HONORIS CAUSA DEGREE OF UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA**

LAUDATIO

Dear Rector Andrei Marga
Dear rector Cornel Antal
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, at the University of Oradea, in the name of the Faculty of History, Geography, and International Relations, we have the great honour to sustain publicly the reasoning according to which our distinguished guest associates to both the teaching staff and to the identity building of our university at the harmonizing juncture of common interests of the academic institution in a democratic society.

Professor Marga's presence does nothing but to acknowledge the existence of direct and indirect links between the academic society of Oradea and Cluj. At the same time his visit suggests the harmonization of the interests of the Romanian academic communities with regard to the expectations, opportunities and social constraints.

The distinguished professor Andrei Marga represents one of the prominent personalities of the Romanian society, who, during the last decades has brought an important contribution to the development of knowledge and to the promotion of the European values in the academic community and in the society of Romania.

We can start by concluding that from a scientific point of view all his contributions are remarkable in the contemporary philosophical debates, where as a professor and a researcher he has opened new directions for investigation and has developed pragmatic interpretations regarding the adjustment of the contemporary society to the dynamics and challenges of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st.

But before drawing the conclusions we should consider him as a paragon in his career, academic life and his capacity to adapt to more or less democratic regimes, characteristics which are relevant when we want to fully understand the degree to which his career and achievements can be a landmark for the young generations and bring about the critical recognition of his colleagues.

In this moment of celebration we should observe that the landmarks promoted by Professor Andrei Marga are relevant when bringing into discussion the importance of the academic in the society. When referring directly to Professor Andrei Marga's activity we can ascertain that the paragon he promotes suggests the following:

First and foremost, the academic is a teacher and his identity is shaped by his relation with the student during the investigation of the topics in discussion in courses and seminars and during the study of the classic and unconventional texts, thus continually contributing to maintain a scientific debate.

Secondly, the position assumed as academic makes him take part and brings his contribution to scientific debates where the national and international dimension is overcome by such rapports as reality/truth/reason/argument/applicability. Contemporary topics (even the philosophical ones) have no frontiers because the problems of this world and the influence of globalization do not correspond to the geographical boundaries any more. Hence, Professor Andrei Marga has complied with and involved in the dynamics of

the European and international interdependencies regarding the reconfiguration of the international system mainly in the academic community on the ground of the transformations of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st.

Thirdly, the academic career asks for investigations and research activities upon unprecedented topics done either by means of direct use of certain opportunities or as an answer to certain external variables. We can affirm with no doubt that professor Andrei Marga has assumed his role as a researcher with responsibility because he has taken interest in, he has informed and interrogated the national, European and international dynamics. Even more, his contributions suggest solutions, options and opportunities regarding approaches that can be adapted to a decisional and managerial level.

Fourthly, we must point out that professor Andrei Marga as a rector of the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca has succeeded in imposing a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary dimension of the academic studies. The approach he suggests is based on the appreciation of a competitive European environment that must begin with assuming and adapting identities which contribute to build a comprehensive image of the international society through their cultural heritage.

The management model of the University of Cluj represents an intercultural landmark all over Europe as it goes beyond the traditional-national dimension of the Romanian universities and opens means to collaborate with the international communities on the basis of competition and value promotion.

Last but not least we must admit that the international recognition, the diplomas, the state decrees and the honorary degrees Professor Andrei Marga has been rewarded bring about the idea that the performance landmarks are overcome by the achievements.

Beyond all these dimensions which make up professor Andrei Marga's personality, there is the man Andrei Marga. He was born in 1946 in Pietris, Bistrita/Nasaud county, he has a Bachelor Degree in Philosophy, he graduated the Babes-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca in 1971, he has also specialized in sociology. In 1975-1976 and in 1980-1994, as a scholar he attended documentary internships in different prestigious universities in Europe and USA. 1976 marks the beginning of his important scientific research: his doctoral thesis dedicated to the German philosopher Herbert Marcuse.

The opportunities after 1989 have been seen as sources which have enhanced professor Marga's pro-European orientation which belongs to the concepts deriving from the cultural heritage of Europe and results into a formula that gathers identity dimensions which spring from philosophy, religion, nationalism, political doctrines and cultural-identity manifestations drawn upon the good, and welfare seen as elements belonging to democratic interpretations and adaptations to the global medium. From this point of view Professor Marga's conclusions directly refer to topics with fundamental importance regarding the adjustment of the Romanian society to the dynamics of European integration and the pressures of globalization.

The man Andrei Marga is defined through his almost 40 year activity as a teacher and a researcher at the Babes Bolyai University, Professor Marga has won the prestige and appreciation among students and academics in the country and abroad as titular of contemporary philosophy and argumentation theory courses. His domains of interest have expanded towards the Philosophy of European Unification, American Pragmatism, Religion in the Globalizing Era, University Development and Management. His activity as a publicist in the last two decades is representative for Professor Marga's searches concerning answers and solutions to the great challenges of the contemporary world and especially those of the Romanian society. Shortly, we may mention the 32 books signed as

single author, tens of studies and articles published in different languages in social science journals and volumes.

The recognition of his qualities, lead to Professor Marga's nomination as Minister of the National Education Ministry (1997-2000). In this position he proposed a deep reform of the Romanian educational system, organized in 6 chapters.

Andrei Marga represents a complex personality as teacher, philosopher, rector, Minister and political man of the contemporary Romanian society. Through his example in career and every day life he is a paragon of what academics should be in the life of the city. It is a quality which, unfortunately is still missing with many academics. His presence in the public life is also a guarantee that there are still people who can ensure the democratic values.

By awarding the Doctor Honoris Causa Degree to Professor Andrei Marga, rector of the Babes-Bolyai University, our university expresses its gratitude for his work and activity and signifies the acceptance of the principles and values promoted by professor Marga in public life by the academic community of Oradea

Following the decision of the Senate of the University of Oradea, Professor Andrei Marga joins the academics of Oradea and it is our great honor to confer the Doctor Honoris Causa degree of our University. We assure the rector of our consideration, admiration and gratitude and we also hope it is mutual.

Oradea, 20.05.2010

University Professor Ioan Horga, Ph.D

THE SPEECH OF THE RECTOR OF BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY FROM CLUJ-NAPOCA, PROF. ANDREI MARGA PHD PRESENTED IN MAY 20, 2010, WHEN HE RECEIVED THE TITLE OF DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA.

**ABOUT
UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

Andrei MARGA

The language used in the discussion about universities in Europe has changed during only one generation of academic leaders. The place occupied not long ago by terms such as *academic freedom, seminar essay, lecture, academic professorship, rector, academic senate* is now replaced by rather new notions such as *accountability, workload, lesson, university teacher, president, council of administration, outcomes*. This last row of notions does not completely remove the previous one, but it modifies its importance and, in fact, its meaning.

Recently, the new language has promoted the English term, with French origins, of *governance* for the description of the organisation and in explaining the functioning of universities, as well as in actions taken to improve their achievements. Let us go over the difficulties for the translation of the expression into neo-Latin, Germanic or Slavic languages and let us only mention that, when taking *governance* into consideration, not only does one have a language change in approaching the universities, but also a profound change, related to the approach, and even to the culture, having significant implications and consequences. This change is perceived by few people, therefore, *governance* has remained a confusing notion and has often been wrongfully understood, as “*governing*” or “*management*” or “*administration*” or “*legislation*”.

I would like to clarify what *university governance* means and to show where its thematizations are nowadays (1). One cannot understand the *university governance* without taking into consideration the mission and functions of the university (2) and without noticing where values intervene (3).

1.

As mentioned earlier, the shift to the approach of the *governance of the universities* was not only a language change, but more than that – i.e. a change of conception and, after



all, of the organisational culture and of the culture in its large meaning. It has been related to five mutations that took place in the modern society, in a relatively short period of time.

The first mutation was the change in perception, which took place in the management of communities and organisations: the human being was no longer considered just the object of the decisions, but a participant in their implementation, while the profile of the decision-maker was included in the discussion. Otherwise said, the rules of interaction within communities and institutions, such as the quality of the *leadership*, started to be questioned. The approach of *governance*, including of the *governance* within universities, has intervened along with a democratization process, which was considered to be indispensable in order to increase the achievements of the organisations.

The second mutation that led to the approach of governance within universities was the massification of higher education. After 1968, in Europe and afterwards all around the world, one could notice the substantial increase in the number of students, which led to transformations in the entire organisation of the universities: their multiplication and diversification, a new geography of faculties, the increase in the number of teaching staff, the reorganisation of chairs etc. The leadership of universities could not have remained untouched: it had to thematize interaction rules in complex units, where achievements depended not only on the quality of central decisions, but also on the so-called “local” decisions, where “power” was inevitably redistributed. The approach of *governance* in universities has come up as an answer to the needs for the restructuring of the leadership, under the conditions given by the massification of higher education.

The third mutation was the appearance of the industrial society, which requested from universities not necessarily truths, but rather useful knowledge for the economy and the administration, not necessarily people of culture, but rather specialists in technology, economy, administration. Universities were taken out of their isolation in relation to the economy and the administration, and they were transformed into a part of the economy and of the governmental projects. The approach of *governance* in the case of universities was encouraged as a measure of optimization of the productive functioning of an institution which has to make its own decisions by virtue of the autonomy.

The fourth mutation related to the approach of *governance* in universities was the emergence of the “knowledge society”. The competences - professional, communicative, interactive - have become crucial within society, while the innovations and the discoveries have proved to be indispensable for the competitive economy. As a consequence, universities started to be considered under the aspect of their consequences in the formation of specialists and in the production of innovations, while the economic dynamic proved to be dependent on the calibre of the higher education and of the scientific research. The approach of *governance* within universities has gained ground as an action for the identification of and emphasis on those factors that increase the achievements of those institutions.

The fifth mutation that determined the shift to the approach of *governance* within universities was the globalization of the economy and of communications. The globalization has extended the market on which the products are valued, including the products of the universities. The higher education institutions could no longer remain the mere prolongation of the old national cultural projects, but they entered into the wide and intensified competition of the globalized markets. Mention should be made once again that “globalization” is different from “internationalisation”¹ and it does not lead to the standardization of the solutions. If well understood, globalization leads rather to efforts of self-organisation in order to obtain

¹ See Andrei Marga, *The Internationalisation of the European Universities*, in Andrei Marga, *University Reform Today*, Cluj University Press, 2005, pp. 386-389.

achievements capable of winning in the competition extended to the maximum. The approach of *governance* proves to be the path towards a better self-organisation for the production of competitive achievements in the era of globalization.

Certainly, the approach of *governance* within universities has imposed itself on the background of the increased interest of the states for the formation of specialists and for applied scientific researches, as well as in relation with the preoccupation of governments to lead higher education taking into consideration the university autonomy as a pre-condition for achievements. I shall not insist here upon this history of the interweaving of the history within the universities with the evolution of the states' politics and geopolitics, even though the shift towards *the approach of governance* remains part of the social and political changes from the modern society. However, in order to clear the situation in which we are today, I would like to emphasize the fundamental changes that have taken place during the last decades in the academic politics of the governments.

As such, after the preoccupation for the widening of the access to higher education prevailed in the European countries, and this preoccupation strengthened after 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe, as a consequence of the year 1968, at the end of the '90s the problem of the efficiency of higher education came to the forestage. The old theme regarding the *university autonomy* was complemented with the theme of the *responsibility* and, more recently, with that of the *accountability*. As it has already been mentioned in a convincing way in the **Magna Charta Universitatum** (1988), the universities are institutions that are not efficient unless they enjoy autonomy; governments have integrated this truth in legislations that encourage them to assume the autonomy, the responsibility and the practice of the *accountability*, as well as in policies oriented towards the functionalization of universities as actors of the development programmes. The project funding, the differentiation of the types of funding, the stimulation to use the resources of alternative funding, the periodical evaluations by specialised agencies, the emphasis on the formation of competences of the future graduates, the credit transfer system, and many others are composing elements of *this approach of the university as part of the economic, administrative and social programmes*. Within this framework, a new understanding of *governance* has gradually imposed, where the emphasis is put on rules, on the existing societal framework and on the achievement that has to be reached. In the article **Higher education governance in Europe: autonomy, ownership and accountability - A review of the literature** (2006), Jochen Fried presented the current understanding of the concept of *governance* as follows: "a. *Governance means regulation, steering and control (Steuerung or Regelung in German) within the context of a given (social, political, economic, institutional) order; b. It can be described and analysed as «a set of practices whereby independent political and/or economic actors coordinate and/or hierarchically control their activities and interactions... Governance structures are therefore formal and informal institutional devices through which political and economic actors organize and manage their interdependencies»* (Hirst & Thompson, 1997: 362); c. *these structures ultimately serve to enhance or promote the legitimacy and efficiency of the social system by way of organising negotiation processes, setting standards, performing allocation functions, monitoring compliance, reducing conflict, and resolving disputes*"². Here, one can see the concept of *governance* as connoted and predominantly used in the academic practices nowadays.

² Jochen Fried, *Higher Education Governance in Europe: Autonomy, Ownership and Accountability*, in *Higher Education Governance between Democratic Culture, Academic Affiliations and Market Forces*, p. 83.

What were the results of the implementation of such a concept of *governance*? I hereby answer by characterising the current situation of the education and by delineating an alternative.

In the European reflection on the academic formation, one can identify a negative evolution, which one can make intuitive by looking at the dominant concepts in the public debate on education. For instance, at the beginning of the 19th century, in Europe, there was a shift from the medieval university to the institutionalisation of a new educational ideal due to the concordant action of the four classical faculties - sciences, medicine, law and philosophy - and to the conceptual processing owed to Kant, Hegel and Fichte. The result was “*die Universität als Institution einer philosophisch begründeten Ganzheit aller Wissenschaften, die universitas literarum*”³, organised according to the “neo-humanistic conception on formation (*neuhumanistischen Bildungskonzeption*)”. The university was destined for education, while education (*Bildung*) was conceived by Humboldt, in his famous **Theorie der Bildung des Menschen** (1793), as “*den Begriff der Menschheit in unserer Person, sowohl während der Zeit unseres Leben, als auch noch über dasselbe hinaus, durch die Spuren des lebendigen Wirkens, dar wir zurücklassen, eine so großen Inhalt, als möglich zu verschaffen*”⁴. At that time, education (*Bildung*) also gathered, in its purpose, in its content and in its means, at the same time, the individuality and the values of cohabitation, the integration in the present and the memory of the past, the acquiring of a profession and the reflection on its importance within the community, as well as ideas, values and norms from local traditions and universal forms. In the terms used by the “neo-humanism”, the individual and the general were always connected, they presuppose one another. It is from this connection that the classic university of the modern era resulted and it spread on a large surface of the world.

Nietzsche was among the first ones who noted that the education (*Bildung*) conceived by his predecessors from the era of the romantic enlightenment remained only an ideal. In **Über die Zukunft unsere Bildungsanstalten** (1872), the philosopher blamed the fact that schools became “*Anstalten der Lebensnoth*” subordinated to the needs of the economy, technology and administration, so that “*Anstalten der Bildung*” remained very few⁵. “*Die Schule hat keine wichtigere Aufgabe, als strenges Denken, vorsichtiges Urtheilen, consequentes Schließen zu lehren: deshalb hat sie von allen Dingen abzusehn, die nicht für diese Operationen tauglich sind, zum Beispiel von der Religion*”⁶ - Nietzsche wrote.

Theodor W. Adorno caught a later stage of those “*Anstalten der Lebensnoth*”, where they were no longer preoccupied with “*strenges Denken*”, but they became instead a part of the current enterprises and policies. In **Theorie des Halbbildung** (1959), he spoke of “the decay of the education (*Verfall der Bildung*)” and gave a univocal diagnosis: one could have spoken of “*sozialisierte Halbbildung, der Allgegenwart des entfremdeten Geistes*”⁷. This meant an education from where the purpose of things and actions disappeared together with the installing of “the dictate of the means, of the rigid and poor utility (*Diktat der Mittel, der sturen und kargen Nützlichkeit*)”. “*Das Bewusstsein geht unmittelbar von einer zur anderen Heteronomie über; anstelle der Autorität der Bibel tritt die des Sportplatzes, des Fernsehens und des «Wahren Geschichten», die auf den Auspruch des Buchstäblichen,*

³ Nachwort, on *Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten*, Reclam, Leipzig, 1990, p. 292.

⁴ Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Theorie der Bildung des Menschen*, in Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Werke*, Band I, p. 235.

⁵ Nietzsche, *Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*, in *Nachgelassene Fragmente. Kritische Studienausgabe*, Hrsg. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinavi, 1980, Band 10, p. 717.

⁶ Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Band 2, p. 220.

⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, *Theorie der Halbbildung*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 8.

der *Tatsächlichkeit diesseits der produktiven Einbildungskraft sich stützt*”⁸. Theodor W. Adorno caught in severe but justified terms the decline of the education (*Bildung*), which marked the universal culture of the last two centuries, in the “cultural”, mercantilist and conformist “industry” of the late modernity.

The diagnosis of the situation has changed once again, becoming even more negative: in **Theorie der Unbildung. Die Irrtümer der Wissensgesellschaft** (2006), Konrad Paul Liessmann spoke of the “*Unbildung*” (the term can be translated as “the lack of education”), i.e. the ceasing of the “regulative function” of the former education (*Bildung*). “The estranged spirit (*der entfremdete Geist*)” Theodor W. Adorno was mentioning passed to “the acclaimed lack of spirit (*akklamierte Geistlosigkeit*)”. “*Darin sprach sich ein Programm aus, das mit jenem Geist, der seit Humboldt und Hegel als Subjekt und Objekt von Bildung fungierte, nichts mehr zu tun haben wollte. Ohne Geist, also ohne den Versuch, die harte Rinde der Empirie zu durchdringen und auf einen reflexiven und selbstreflexiven Begriff zu bringen, also ohne das was Adorno den Wahrheit als letzte Referenz von Bildung nannte, kann von dieser nicht mehr die Rede sein*”⁹. The education (*Bildung*) was replaced by the formation of “skills and aptitudes (*Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen*)” under the conditions set by the “suspension of that individuality that once was both addressee and actor of the education”. This way, the persons entering into the education get to be considered just as “*human capital*” and the entire educational organisation is transformed according to the economic programmes. In the meantime, “*hat die Bildung nicht länger die Funktion der Reproduktion der ständischen Strukturen der Fachbildung, vielmehr wird sie auf die Vermittlung von Grundkompetenzen verpflichtet, die notwendig sind, um sich auf dem offenen Markt zu behaupten. Sie dient nun der Produktion und Reproduktion von Humankapital, das Rendite erwirtschaften soll*”¹⁰.

Even though the evoked diagnoses present a negative evolution, having sometimes radical accents, mention should be made that the clues in their favour are not missing and they have become a practical problem. In fact, the lack of orientation in the current societies, the multiple and recurrent crises that are affecting them, the proliferation of the “negative futurism” (“let us leave the things just the way they are, as it could be worse!”), the closing of the horizons (“we cannot see any chance of changing!”), the civil passivity, the paralysis of the will are also the sign for the erosion of the education.

On the other hand, an indicator of the negative transformation within universities is also their attempt to escape from their mission and their self-conception in terms of functions. If Humboldt still saw the university as “*Gipfel in dem alles, was unmittelbar für die moralische Kultur der Nation geschieht, zusammenkommt*” and, closer to our time, in **The American University** (1973), Talcott Parsons spoke of the differentiated functions of the university – “*research and preparation of succession in science; academic training for the profession; general training; contribution to the cultural self-understanding and to the intellectual illumination*”¹¹ – then, in the newer conception of the universities, the mission is reduced to functions, while functions are dissolved in the adaptation to the society given by serving its programmes. The cultural, moral or even civil engagement of the university is less and less discussed. “*An industrialist view*” upon the university is embraced without any

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁹ Konrad Paul Liessmann, *Theorie der Unbildung. Die Irrtümer der Wissensgesellschaft*, Piper, München, 2008, p. 70.

¹⁰ Richard Münch, *Globale Eliten, locale Autoritäten. Bildung und Wissenschaft unter den Regime von PISA, McKinsey&Co.*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2003, p. 30.

¹¹ Talcott Parsons, G. M. Plat, *The American University*, Cambridge University Press, 1973.

condition and it has a net option: “*For the twenty-first century, the agenda must not be about structures and processes as ends in themselves. The future agenda must be about people: the students customers, their needs and what, as graduates, they can contribute including in their employers*”¹².

The charges brought to the present situation of the universities are very precise: one of the most important sociologists of our days, Richard Münich wrote in **Globale Eliten, lokale Autoritäten** (2009): *The New Public Management ist das zentrale Instrument der neoliberalen Regierungskunst, die auf Verhaltensstrenge durch Märkte, Quasimärkte, Wettbewerb und Anreize setzt. Dieses Steuerungsmodell muss komplexe Leistungen auf eine überschaubare Zahl von Parameter reduzieren, an denen sich Steuerungsinstanzen (Prinzipale), Gesteuerte (Agenten), Akkreditierungsagenturen und Kunden orientieren können*¹³. The implications are profound: the expert reuniting knowledge and consciousness is replaced by the clerk who is focused on reading quantitative parameters; the decisional autonomy of the professor is replaced by the integration into programmes; the deprofessionalization of the teaching staff is legitimate if measurable parameters are reached; the bureaucracy of the audit takes the lead over the professionals that have remained, while the teaching and scientific research activities are deformed under the pressure of the purely quantitative indicators that have to be reached; the agencies for evaluation and accreditation become decision-making bodies for professional affirmation and the professional ideal becomes the satisfaction of their standards or the obtaining of grants; a bureaucracy of the quality control watches over the implementation of the standards without assuming responsibility for the outcomes; the university professors lose their former authority and become a sort of clerks bearing pretentious titles; the educational relationship between the professor and the student is replaced by the relationship between the bidder and the client; the future closes down in this achievement horizon that many people consider to be the only one possible, the proof being the fact that almost no political party questions “*the new political management*”.

I consider that, no matter how arguments are used, this diagnosis is true. It is realistic to admit that „*die neue Form von Governance ist mit dem neuen Bildungsmodell wahlverwandt, d.h. die Strukturen ergänzen sich gegenseitig. Das neue Bildungsmodell setzt Bildung auf Wissens- und Kompetenzerwerb um und zerlegt den Prozess in einzeln abgeprüfte Kurse, die nahezu beliebig kombiniert werden können. Die Vielzahl der damit verbundenen Einzelprüfungen eignen sich als Leistungsindikatoren für das »Qualitätsmanagement«. An die gemessenen Erfolge wird dann an den Universitäten die so genannte »Leistungsorientierte Mittelverteilung« (LOM) geknüpft. Dieses System belohnt die Zerlegung eines Studiengangs in eine möglichst große Zahl kleinster Kurseinheiten mit entsprechenden Teilprüfungsleistungen*”¹⁴. However, this negative diagnosis does not comprise the whole truth about the present situation. I believe that *we are, at least in Europe, at the end of a cycle, which is signalled by a major change: the thematization of excellence in education, especially in universities, which engages the reorganisation of governance*. This implies, from the very beginning, the elucidation of the mission and functions of the university as institution.

¹² Graham Day, *One Individualist View*, in *Universities in the Twenty-First Century*, Paul Hamley Foundation, National Commission on Education, London, 1994, p. 28.

¹³ Richard Münich, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

2.

Placed in a late modern society that recorded structural change and was ‘challenged’ from many directions, yet determined, on the other side, to reconcile to some extent contradicting imperatives (such as, for instance, gaining economic relevance and promoting autonomy), the university is forced to explicitly clarify its profile and to reorganize itself. Many of the universities’ dilemmas can be solved by clarifying this profile. This means, above all, clarifying its mission and functions. But how can one establish today the mission of the university?

From the very beginning we have to say that the mission of the university does not allow for a reduction to a ‘list of aims’ that are so frequent in the statutes of nowadays universities¹⁵. This mission can be established now – without deriving it from general outlooks, which have become unrealistic, on knowledge and society and avoiding a restrictive functionalism, which, in turn, is incapable of taking over the diversified functions that contemporary universities fulfill - by taking as a starting point the lasting experience of prominent universities¹⁶. From this point of view, if by *mission* we understand the specific task designed for an institution, then it can be said, with enough factual grounds, that the mission of today’s university is preparing specialists at the higher level of knowledge in order to increase knowledge and to improve people’s living conditions.

Several important delimitations are implied with this determination: the mission of the university is not reduced to training, since it includes higher education and the formation of abilities to develop knowledge; this mission cannot overlap scientific research, since it is directed to training; the mission of the university is not exhausted through services, since these are conditioned by training and by its own scientific research.

If by *function* we understand the activities that need to be carried out in order to fulfill the mission, then it can be said, with sufficient reasons, that the functions of the university are multiple. Talcot Parsons delineated, in **The American University** (1973), four functions of the university: research and the preparation of the new generations of researchers; the academic training for a profession; general training; contributions to cultural self-understanding and intellectual enlightenment¹⁷. In the view that is made possible today, the functions of the university are more and they let themselves ordered differently, as they have complex inner links.

The mission of training specialists at a superior level of knowledge, in order to increase knowledge and to improve people’s lives, can be achieved today - under the circumstances in which the universities ensure the cooperative search for truth and use their autonomy as an indispensable premise of their excellence, as well as under the circumstances in which the technological, economic and social development of communities depend on this excellence - only if the university assumes *multiple functions*. The following functions are just as important as they are evident: the training of specialists capable of taking over and further the knowledge developed through higher education; carrying out competitive scientific research; training specialists able to take on and put into practice the application of knowledge through higher training; providing updated technologies through

¹⁵ See, for example, Graham Impey, Nic Underhill, *The ELT Manager’s Handbook*, Heinemann, Oxford, 1994, p. 9 and f.

¹⁶ See Andrei Marga, *Die Mission und die Funktionen der Universität heute*, in Winfried Böhn und Martin Lindauer (Hrsg.), *Die Universität in der Gesellschaft. Verantwortung und Chancen für die Zukunft*, pp. 183-207.

¹⁷ T. Parsons, G. M. Platt, *The American University*, Cambridge University Press, Mass., 1972, chapter 2.

technological innovation; analyzing the evolutions in the economic, social and administrative environment; the assessment of situations and the commitment to civil rights, social justice and reforms. Therefore, the functions of the university are nowadays comprehensively assumed and have the best chances of success if the university is considered a formative institution for *sharing and increasing knowledge*; *being a center of competitive scientific research*; a formative institution for *taking over and applying knowledge*; a source of *technological innovation*; a forum for the *critical analysis of situations*; a place for *commitment to civil rights, social justice and reforms*.

Each of these functions is to be understood systematically, taking into account the present conditions of a university's actions. For instance, the university as a formative institution has to be rethought within the framework of the strong internationalization of the contents and the organization of higher education, just as the university as system of services for the community should be regarded in the framework of globalization and of the increased competition on the products markets, and the university as a forum of critical analysis should be considered against the background of the strong tendency towards functional differentiation within modern society.

This range of functions - one can rightfully say - makes one realize the enduring establishment of the university in European societies without the *passeist refuge* into a past that has inevitably become a part of the museum, and without *the surrealist claim* to a future inevitably more complicated than one thinks. It means an understanding of the university in which this institution continues - conversely - to ensure *the cooperative and argumentative search for truth*, as a benefit of autonomy, without reclusion and without allowing itself to be dissolved by the evolutions around it.

This range of functions certainly has an explanation based on the understanding of the university mission and on the historical evolution. More important, however, than the possibility of this explanation, is the fact that this range of functions allows us to depart, on a solid factual basis, from *the aporias*, the reflection on university seemed to enter in recent decades. We can, for instance, resist giving in to the claims according to which the 'university has died' under the burden of functionalist grounds, highlighting the clues of the cooperative search for truth and of the functional autonomy of the university. We can resist giving in to the temptation of reducing university education to the training naturally required by the economic environment, by highlighting the university as a formative institution for the expansion of knowledge and as a center for competitive scientific research. We can face the temptations from inside the universities to imagine them as places for the non-committed search of truth, isolated from the events of society, affirming, in a beneficial way, the university as a source of technological innovation, a forum for critical analysis and a place of commitment to civil rights, social justice and reforms. We can steer clear of the temptation of deforming university courses and seminars, transforming them into places for mere information for action, by developing the university as a formative institution for the taking over, sharing and expansion of knowledge, a center for competitive scientific research and a system of specialized community services. We can, in support of this range of university functions, in an era of the proliferation of institutions only self-entitled as universities and of unprecedented requests addressed to higher education, to clarify once again, with the necessary rigor, what a university proper means today, and therefore, when we deal with '*true universities*'¹⁸.

Already through their mission and explicitly through their functions, *universities embody values, a function based on certain values and promote values within society*. In

¹⁸ See *Magna Charta Universitatum*

fact, universities embody values, but they remain competitive institutions (in forming specialists and knowledge renewal), so that they never let themselves be reduced to only one value, no matter which value that is (therefore neither to academic freedom and university autonomy, nor to equity, for instance, no matter how indispensable any of these values is). *The values of higher education are multiple and they have to be assumed together.*

3.

Where do values intervene in the organization and functioning of a university?

As any other institution or system in the differentiated societies of the modern world, *the choice of values* is inevitable within a university. Eventually, wouldn't a value-based (let's say "truth" or "efficiency") university or system engage an option regarding the other values (for instance, "freedom" or "equality"), in fact the hierarchy of values? Doesn't the promotion of certain values (for example, "equity") involve an option related to competitive values (for instance, "efficiency")? One may say that, even tacitly, a university or a system of higher education, no matter how rigorously organized they might be, from the legal, administrative or technical point of view, request values and imply options among values. Values are unique, in a precise meaning. Therefore, the practical problem is not that of the existence of values within universities as institutions and within the systems of higher education, as this existence is certain and does not constitute a topic of discussion. The problem is another one: having in view the mission and functions of the university and of the higher education system, *what values does a university have to assume?*

Universities represent competitive institutions in the professional formation and education of one's personality, scientific research and community services, promotion of knowledge and a highly intellectual approach, the function of which is based on rules (legislation, internal regulation, strategies, operational planning etc.). Any institution functions according to some rules. Is the reference only to its own rules enough for the institution to function according to them? Or to function with competitive achievements? The answer is "no" because, in fact, anywhere in the world, in the case of any institution, not only does *the implementation of rules depend on the values* assumed by those involved, but those values open the horizon where the rules themselves are applied. Values represent conditions for the possibility and efficiency of rules.

We would like to debate this assertion by an analogy with the inspiring argumentation of the need for the functioning of democracy to be nurtured by *cultural ideals*¹⁹. The ideals intervene in the rules of democracy at two decisive moments. First of all, ideals intervene in the genesis itself of the rules ("il ne faut pas oublier que de grandes luttes pour des idéaux ont produit ces règles") and, afterwards, they intervene when rules are applied (rules cannot become common laws without having the individuals animated by the ideals that made rules possible). In the case of democracy, one may speak of ideals such as tolerance, non-violence, gradual modernization of the society, fraternity, which have turned the rules of democracy into reality and support their implementation.

In their turn, universities function based on certain ideals, which also intervene at least at two points: in the genesis of rules and in the support of their implementation. For instance, the rules of the seminar have been possible only under the condition of assuming *the ideal of the cooperative pursuit of the truth*, and the rules for the knowledge exam cannot be successfully implemented unless all the persons involved are guided by *the ideal of knowledge expansion* and of *the maximization of their own competences*. And examples can

¹⁹ Norberto Bobbio, *Le futur de la démocratie*, Seuil, Paris, 2007, pp. 131-133.

go on. The university has emerged and optimally functions only under circumstances in which those who bring it to life are animated by certain ideals.

The reverse relation is also valid. Values represent a condition for the possibility of the rules, but *values themselves can only be promoted under the conditions of certain adequate rules*. Let us take as an example the current debate on equity related to the access to universities. It is well known that the university is an institution open to any citizen that accomplishes certain requirements as to the amount of knowledge and skills they possess. The social achievement of an academic system consists exactly in being accessible to social categories as diverse and wide as possible of the population in the society. In fact, each person must have the chance to attend courses of higher education according to his/her personal life project. In other words, *equity* represents the founding value of the university. But this value does not actually become real if the system of higher education is in such a way differentiated that those persons with uncompetitive incomes occupy most of the places in permissive universities that lack achievements. Equity does not allow its separation from *quality*, so that university practices affect it from this point of view as well.

Values condition the obtaining of achievements within institutions. For instance, if one takes into consideration the preliminary situation of activities, what we call “good work”, then one may say that professional skills and abilities, which imply scientific knowledge, are definitely of crucial importance. Are these skills and abilities, as well as the scientific knowledge that upholds them, enough in order to obtain “good work”? In fact, there is always a difference between “being member of a profession” and “acting like a professional”, and for many reasons “the individual must be able to step back from daily life and to conceptualize the nature of work and the nature of community”²⁰. Current pedagogies confirm, once again, that “science can never constitute a sufficient education” and that “science - even with engineering, technology and mathematics thrown in - is not the only, and not even the only important, are of knowledge... Other vast areas of understanding - the social sciences, the humanities, civics, civility, ethics, health, safety, training of one's body - deserve their day in the sun, and, equally, their hours in the curriculum”²¹. *Achievements, therefore beginning with “good work”, depend not only on professionalism, but also on the action of those involved, just like the professionals.*

Values are a necessary condition not only for the productive functioning of systems (political, legal, economic etc.), but also for the productive exercise of leading positions. The way in which this exercise is made allows us to make a *distinction between the boss (one who acquires authority only in the name of his/her appointment or election), the manager (one who gains authority based on the ability to lead a system in order to reach an established achievement) and the leader (one who has authority due to his/her ability to establish goals, which have to be reached by the system, and alternatives to direction and action)*²². The issue of values appears in each person's case, and the research carried out during the last years, dedicated to the management of institutions, has signaled phenomena such as “the impoverishment of emotionality”, “the isolation among people”, “the attempt to become noticed at any cost”, “the unproductive waste of energies”, “the wrong evaluation of the limits of one's own power”, “the internalization of the pressures around until the paralysis of the will”, “arbitrary decision”, personality problems under different forms. The observation that

²⁰ Howard Gardner, *Five Minds for the Future*, Harvard Business Press, Boston, Mass., 2008, p. 129.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 14-15.

²² See Andrei Marga, *Multiculturalism, Interculturality and Leadership*, in *Higher Education in the World*, 3, GUNI, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2008, pp. 114-118.

the only constant in an individual's life is self-awareness, exposed to a constructive change²³, is available in all cases. And this “*self-awareness*“ marks the behavior of any person, even though the communities and systems that surround his/her life are present in the anonymous structures of his/her own living. On the other hand, the more “self-awareness” communicates with the acquired knowledge, is willing to be informed by culture, makes the synthesis of the data and engages with its entire being, the more a person can examine more profoundly whether the reality given by experience is the one he/she wants and whether his/her own approach has alternatives or not. It has been rightfully said that, on the conception level, the individual has the experience of his/her sincerity²⁴ exactly in philosophy. This statement is valid, in fact, in relation to *the culture* acquired by that person.

Today European universities are confronted with “*challenges*” *specific to the new century*: “extending education” by “continuing education”, “massification of traditional academic training” and increasing the importance of postgraduate studies, “globalization of the qualification market”, internationalization of training, multiplication of higher education providers, setting up a comprehensive electronic world library, expansion of the long distance higher education system, profiling of “constructive learning”, transition from the formation of “individuals” to the formation of “persons”²⁵. And in a society that has entered a financial and economic crisis, there are other “challenges” that are added to the above-mentioned “challenges”, i.e. the challenge of “ensuring an institution's own sustainability”, of articulating new knowledge and identifying the means to overcome the “crisis existing in the late modernity”, of facing “the risks existing in the globalised society”.

Impressive phrases - “the demise of metanarratives”, “the dictatorship of relativism” “the emergence of a multicultural and intercultural society”, “pay or decay”, “the imperative to develop cutting edge research” “the emergence of green economy”, “toxic loans and toxic developments”, “the hour of nooethics, besides ecoethics and bioethics”, “the crisis of the existing development model”, “the mission of the university is to transcend any narrow utility”, “the competition of the universities” etc. – signal *changes in the higher education environment*. They represent a clue to the need for changes in the academic organization.

The *dilemmas* confessed, in the last decade, by universities themselves are pressing: should they continue the tradition or should they reorganize? Should they continue classicism or should they embrace functionalism? Should they promote the humanities and reflexive sciences or should they orientate towards technologies? Should they be selective or should they transform into mass-universities? Scientific research or education? Elitism or accessibility? Equity or competitiveness? Academic specialization or comprehensive specialization? Financing only from public resources or multiplication of the financing resources? Tuition or tuition-free studies? Transparency of activities or concern for competition? Formation for a wide domain or skills creation? Efficiency or achievement? Preparing graduates capable of doing or persons capable of acting? Forming visions or

²³ Klaus-Jürgen Grün, *Wozu benötigen Führungskräfte Philosophie? Autonomie und Freiheit durch methodisches Denken*, Ronnenburger Kreis, Büdingen, 2004, p. 11: „die einzige Konstante im Leben eines Menschen ist sein Selbstbewußtsein, und dieses ist ständiger Wandlung ausgesetzt“.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 52: „in der Philosophie macht der Mensch Erfahrung mit der eigenen Aufrichtigkeit“.

²⁵ See, for further details, Andrei Marga, *The Reform of Education and the Challenges of the Next Century* (2000), in Andrei Marga, *University Reform Today*, Cluj University Press, 2005, pp. 111-135. See also Andrei Marga, *Academic Consequences of Globalization. Open Markets, Autonomous Organizations, Creative Minds*, in Malcolm H. Field, James Figan (eds.), *Education Across Borders. Philosophy, Policy, Pedagogy. New Paradigms and Challenges*, Waseda University, Tokyo, 2005, pp. 17-28.

forming competences? Matching education systems or preserving diversity? Internationalization or endogamy? The decisions taken by university administrations are confronted nowadays with these dilemmas.

Solving the above-mentioned dilemmas does not mean that *risks* do not appear. For several years now, the perceptible risks for higher education institutions are: under-funding; losing the competitions of the globalization era; migration of its own specialists; dependence on private financiers; unemployment of graduates; changes on the labor market; political extremism in some contexts and several others. Some of those risks started to grow deeper during the crisis that began in 2008.

One may say that the *educational profile of the university* must be clarified and, in some cases, radically redesigned. One may notice that the development of civic skills (the ability to systematically formulate and test hypotheses, to argue, to comprehensively approach an issue, to take up civic initiatives) has to become an important priority. On the other hand, one cannot provide competitive training without foreign languages and without participating, with original projects, in the innovation process. The existing teaching methodology and pedagogy must be reconstructed, book reading should be revived, and formation must accompany professional training.

In its turn, *the cultural profile of universities* has to be questioned nowadays. Students need to be trained so that, at the end of the very first cycle, they possess the abilities, skills and competences enabling them to embrace and solve concrete problems. Their training must be oriented towards the concrete demands of technology, economy, administration, and culture. The universities can reach a high level of performance by building upon their students' training in the solving of concrete problems, upon their knowledge of the technical, economic and administrative environment and upon a certain institutional culture. Entrepreneurial training has become part of general education. A university graduate gains in competitiveness if he/she is an entrepreneur as well as an executor, if he/she is willing and capable of assuming not only concrete professional responsibilities, but also institutional and public ones too. A withdrawal into individualism, be it that of one's profession, is no longer productive.

In the last decades, many academics and students have made confusion *between the study of social sciences and the ideological indoctrination*, and ended up virtually eliminating these sciences from their curriculum. It is also true that most of those who taught such disciplines were not prepared enough for today's social sciences. However, the study of sociology, philosophy, argumentation, management, political organization is essential for students, and universities' curricula should be organized properly²⁶. The social sciences that need to be cultivated are radically different from those we used to have prior to the historical changes in the world, and the professors called upon to teach them are different. Above all, however, a competitive university is that where the students can integrate their specialized knowledge into a conception that enables them to systematically approach the problems, to formulate hypotheses and put them to the test, to examine conflicting points of view and to argue their opinions, to bring in new perspectives and solutions.

The capacity of a university is properly measured by the extent to which it develops *the ability to critically examine* one's own institutional and general culture. "Critical

²⁶ See Patricia Kelly, *Internationalizing the Curriculum: For Profit or Planet?*, in Sohail Inayatullah and Jennifer Gidley (eds.), *The University in Transformation. Global Perspectives on the Future of the University*, Bergin&Garvey, Westport (Connecticut), London, 2000, pp. 161-174; Philippe Breton, *Convaincre sans manipuler. Apprendre à argumenter*, La Découverte, Paris, 2008.

reasoning” and “critical argumentation” are indispensable components of a curriculum nowadays. On the other hand, the history of the last decades has also turned *multiculturalism and interculturalism* into important pillars of intellectual relevance, multiculturalism having new sources nowadays. Besides the historical multiculturalism – the situation in which, on the same territory and as a consequence of history, the different cultures or different ethnic or religious communities coexist – we have today a multiculturalism of migration – the situation in which, on the same territory and as a consequence of the immigration, different cultures with different origins meet – and a multiculturalism of restructuring – the situation in which, in the area covered by an institution or a company, the different cultures, relative to different professions, generations, genders etc. meet. *Against the multiculturalism we encounter in the era of globalization, the interculturality and the intercultural education become a task.* Universities are related to the cultivation and the *promotion of outlooks* on the human, social and cosmic world, but these very outlooks are grounded in a critical examination of traditions, in learning from better experiences and in a constant pondering upon the consequences of various visions.